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FACEBOOK DATA LEAK LEAVES 53 CRORE USERS VULNERABLE

Hackers posted user data, including phone numbers, biodata, locations, date of birth and some email IDs for free on a forum

61 LAKH INDIANS VULNERABLE TO CYBERATTACK

The leak, found by cyber intelligence firm Hudson Rock, has compromised the privacy and cybersecurity of 61 lakh Indians as well. The hackers siphoned off user data from 106 countries. The worst-hit was the US with 3.2 crore breaches, followed by the UK with 1.1 crore. Cybercriminals now have access to the data, which can be used to scam or impersonate users

FACEBOOK CLAIMS IT'S OLD DATA

- Facebook tried to downplay the situation with a spokesperson claiming the data in question is old and was first brought to its notice in 2019. It claimed that the issue was 'fixed' in August '19
- But Facebook remained tightlipped on what the 'fix' was. It was also silent on the ready availability of user data for hackers

87 million
USERS' DATA OBTAINED BY CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT IN 2013

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARWAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

K'taka rolls back gym shutdown order, allows 50 per cent capacity

Facilities that don't follow Covid-19 norms will be shut till situation improves, says order

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

AFTER softening its stand on occupancy at cinema theatres over Covid, the Karnataka Government on Sunday withdrew its prohibition on gyms too. In a fresh order, the State Government said gyms can remain open as long as they are functioning at 50 per cent capacity at all given times.

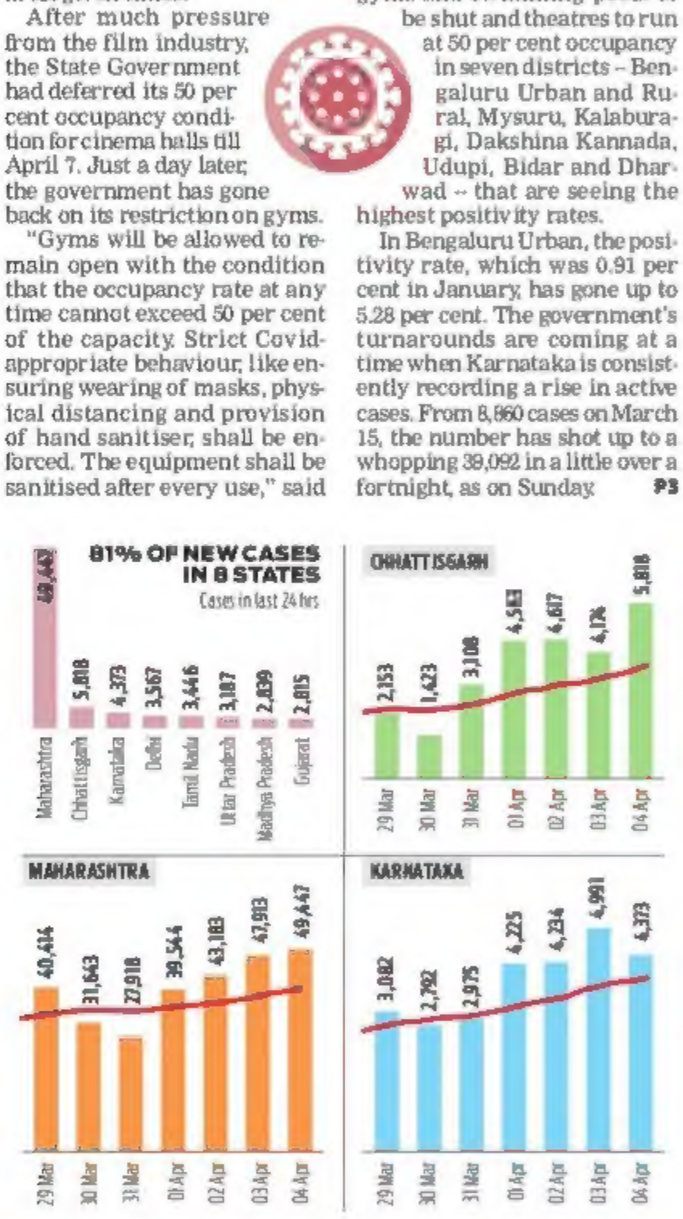
After much pressure from the film industry, the State Government had deferred its 50 per cent occupancy condition for cinema halls till April 7. Just a day later, the government has gone back on its restriction on gyms.

"Gyms will be allowed to remain open with the condition that the occupancy rate at any time cannot exceed 50 per cent of the capacity. Strict Covid-appropriate behaviour, like ensuring wearing of masks, physical distancing and provision of hand sanitiser, shall be enforced. The equipment shall be sanitised after every use," said a revised order signed by Chief Secretary P Ravikumar.

The order also warns that any violation of the condition will lead to the closure of such gyms till the pandemic is over.

The rollback on the closure of gyms comes two days after the State Government brought in fresh restrictions to curb the rising number of Covid cases. The initial order asked for all gyms and swimming pools to be shut and theatres to run at 50 per cent occupancy in seven districts – Bengaluru Urban and Rural, Mysuru, Kalaburagi, Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Bidar and Dharwad – that are seeing the highest positivity rates.

In Bengaluru Urban, the positivity rate, which was 0.91 per cent in January, has gone up to 5.28 per cent. The government's turnarounds are coming at a time when Karnataka is consistently recording a rise in active cases. From 8,860 cases on March 15, the number has shot up to a whopping 39,092 in a little over a fortnight, as on Sunday. P3



Night & weekend curfew in Maha

Reeling under the burden of daily case surge, the Maharashtra government on Sunday introduced a raft of strict measures like weekend and night curfews, but stopped short of a complete lockdown. The new measures include a weekend curfew, starting 8 pm on Friday to 7 am on Monday; and strict night restrictions between 8 pm and 7 am, starting Monday (April 5). Only essential services would be allowed to operate unhindered till April 30, after which the restrictions could be eased based on an assessment of the outcome of the measures. The decision was taken at an urgent cabinet meeting, during which Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray proposed a complete lockdown, an idea his colleagues opposed, pointing out its economic fallout. Based on the inputs, Thackeray also decided to impose restrictions on gatherings by promulgating CrPC Section 144, but made exemptions for commercial establishments and industries. NCP minister Nawab Malik said the decision was unanimous, and would be in force from April 5 to 30. "It is aimed at saving lives with minimal impact," Malik said.

PM seeks people's participation to fight pandemic

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

ON a day India reported 93,249 new Covid-19 cases and 513 deaths, Prime Minister Narendra Modi went into a huddle with top experts to chart out an action plan to curb the exponential infection growth.

Taking a grim view of the high case load and deaths in Maharashtra, Punjab and Chhattisgarh, Modi directed that central teams comprising public health specialists and clinicians be sent to these states to address the crisis.

The high-level meeting called by the PM was given a detailed presentation, which stated that 10 states are contributing more than 91 per cent of cases and deaths due to Covid-19. The experts attributed the rising trend to lapses in Covid protocol compliance, pandemic fatigue and a lack of effective implementation of containment measures at the field level.

Modi sought the rollout of a five-fold strategy of "Testing, Tracing, Treatment, Covid-appropriate behaviour and Vaccination" with a special campaign for 100 per cent mask usage, personal hygiene and sanitation at public places/workplaces and health facilities for seven days from April 6-14. He also emphasised on community awareness and its involvement in containing the infection.

"As of date, Maharashtra has contributed 57 per cent of total cases in the country in the last 14 days and 47 per cent of deaths in the country during the same period. Punjab has contributed 4.5 per cent of the total number of cases in the country in the last 14 days, besides 16.3 per cent of the total number of deaths," said a statement. The focus of the government is in line with its strategy in June-September last, which included ramping up healthcare infrastructure, availability of oxygen, ventilators, logistics and adopting clinical management protocols in hospitals along with in-home care. Modi specifically stressed on reducing fatalities. On vaccination, the government plans to share its daily analysis of performance with all states.

KEEPING POLLS CLEAN

Karnataka police personnel check vehicles heading towards Tamil Nadu, ahead of polls in that state, at the Attibele check-post on the outskirts of Bengaluru on Sunday | ASHISHKRISHNA HP

THE STRATEGIST AND THE VOTEBANK

THIS election is bipolar. I don't see anything else at the micro or macro level." That's one of Mamata Banerjee's key strategists airing his views, post two volatile phases of polling, with six more to go, a process that cumulatively promises to run a bleeding-edge scythe through West Bengal's political history.

Bengal, particularly Kolkata, is of course teeming with election strategists, free-floating analysts and sundry do-gooders. That's natural for a state with that kind of heightened political consciousness. But our man stands out for various reasons. For one, no one can be more free-floating than him—in an election where the 'outsider/insider' binary has been quite pronounced, he's an outsider on the inside, so to speak, having travelled across a few green fields, been on all sides, peddling his professional wares like a migrant labourer of strategic thought. And he has all the swagger of a new-age visionary.

It's quite a crowded field, though. Some have come to save Bengal from cultural corruption, others have come to rescue it from petty corruption—cut money, *tolabaaji* (extortion), political rent-seeking of many shades, all that. It has some benefits. The hotel industry and the fab cafes haven't seen such brisk business in the last 10 years

Ear to the Ground
WEST BENGAL
SANTWANA BHATTACHARYA

of Didi's rule. None of them will say *koro na* (don't do it) to this moveable feast, corona or no corona.

Among the migratory flocks, some of the busiest are those who make managing elections their raison d'etre. Like our man. Quite apolitical, they look at elections clinically, through the prism of personality cults, creation of catchphrases and hashtags—all with bands of young, outsourced volunteers.

"This election is about Mamata Banerjee," claims one such strategist, "nothing else matters." Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who's thundering forth from more rally pulpits here in Bengal than he may have spoken on some other delicate occasions, pretty much confirms that in his own way. He doesn't utter a line without mockingly invoking her, intoning the words "Arrey Didi...."

The strategist obviously thinks he knows the best. But Mamata, being the Didi that she is, can't be scripted to fit into any box—not even the one that's labelled *Banglar meye* (daughter of Bengal). She's too canny for that. In Cooch Behar, for instance, Mamata reminds voters: "This election is not about me. It is about saving Bengal." Cooch Behar (nine seats) and Alipurduar (five seats), up north, nestled along the restive Chicken's Neck, are going to polls on April 6.

CONTINUED ON: P7

EXPRESS READ

Investigators biased, says woman in CD row

Bengaluru: The woman, said to be involved in the CD row allegedly involving former minister Ramesh Jarkiholi, on Sunday accused the police of being biased, and voiced her grievances in a letter to Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Kamal Pant | P6

WITH THIS ISSUE
THE ESSENTIAL CAMPUS DIGEST edex
32 PAGES, INCLUDING 16 OF edex (TABLOID), 4 OF CITY EXPRESS

CM refuses to react to Eshwarappa letter-gate

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

IN his first interaction with the media after Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister K S Eshwarappa's explosive letter, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa refused to react to the rebellion from within the senior party ranks.

The CM has remained tightlipped over the entire situation so far and is keen on letting it fade away from public memory, instead of responding to it despite direct allegations being levelled against him.

"I have not responded earlier. Will not respond now either," was Yediyurappa's stance when asked about Eshwarappa's allegations against him.

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa inaugurates a hostel in Kaginele Kanaka Guru Peetha in Belludi on Sunday, as RDPR Minister K S Eshwarappa (right) looks on.

The CM was speaking to reporters outside his official residence Cauvari on Sunday morning, before starting to Belludi in Davanagere district, where he finally came face to face with Eshwarappa and exchanged greetings. The interaction between the two leaders was limited to a short greeting for the entire event. A miffed Yediyurappa is said to have been assured of action by the Central leadership of the BJP, but only after the bypolls. Party sources said the letter-gate will be handled internally by the party, despite Eshwarappa insisting that it was a matter related to the government. Governor Vajubhai Vala is also unlikely to initiate any action based on the letter, sources added. P4

CRPF personnel carry the coffin of a fallen jawan in Chhattisgarh on Sunday | PTI

It was a rerun of 2010 Dantewada attack; toll 22

SANA SHAKIL/EJAZ KAISER
@ New Delhi/Raipur

A group of around 200 Maoists silently observed the movement of a team of CRPF and state police personnel for nearly a day before singling out a largely isolated detachment of 150 personnel for a full-scale attack on Saturday at Bijapur in Chhattisgarh.

As on Sunday, 22 personnel had died, 35 were injured and one missing, suspected to have been captured by the Maoists. Saturday's encounter is the biggest blow to the security forces since April 2017's Burkapal attack.

The modus operandi of Saturday's encounter appears to be similar to Burkapal or Dantewada (2010) attacks, wherein the armed Maoists isolated and attacked a party of soldiers returning from an area domination exercise. Security forces repeatedly falling prey to this tactic — attacked when they have been in the field for over 24 hours and at their vulnerable worst due to exhaustion — raises questions on the lessons learnt by the forces from their past brushes with the Maoists.

"Our aggressive anti-Maoist operations will continue with renewed strategy. As per our information, the Maoists have suffered heavy casualties. Our sources revealed that they carried their dead in four tractors," said Director General (anti-Maoist operation) Ashok Juneja. The exact casualty on the Maoist side could not be confirmed.

CONTINUED ON: P8

PAYING IT FORWARD

Soota wants elderly to be 'happiest minds', commits ₹200 cr

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

FOUNDER and executive chairman of Happiest Minds, Ashok Soota, on Sunday launched a not-for-profit, SKAN, to conduct research on neurological and ageing issues, partnering with the Indian Institute of Science's (IISc) Centre for Brain Research (CBR) and St John's Geriatric Centre (SJGC).

Soota, a newly-minted billionaire after his company went public recently, has committed ₹200 crore for the projects.

From this, 50 per cent has been earmarked for for the partners, while the rest is investments in SKAN that will include funding direct projects, a statement said.

The objective of the endeavour is to search for kinder, gentler therapies; delaying onset and slowing down the progression of the disease and providing persons a better quality of life even as they live with the illness, according to the statement on Sunday.

The first project will be through CBR on Parkinson's Disease, for which the centre is in the process of setting up a consortium. Neurological research, apart from Parkinson's Disease, will focus on areas like bipolar disorders, strokes and other cerebrovascular disorders.

The research on ageing will focus on under-researched areas, including the setting up of a large community-based research group.

"It is likely to take about a decade to build a world-class institution to conduct research on neurology and ageing," Soota said.

Without disclosing the names, he added that two eminent personalities have agreed to take charge as chairpersons of the two divisions "in case of an exigency to me if line of leadership is not ready to take charge".

Currently, SKAN is looking for chief executive officers, as well as talent for the two divisions pertaining to neurological research and research on ageing, the statement added.

It is likely to take about a decade to build a world-class institution to conduct research on neurology and ageing — Ashok Soota